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Interim Improvements Will Enhance Freeway Access

The Arizona Department of Transportation will begin work this fall to install traffic signals at the ramp intersections of Interstate 17 and Carefree Highway. The new traffic signals will be coordinated with existing signals along Carefree Highway, and some minor roadway modifications will also be done. The westbound lanes of Carefree Highway will be widened to add two left-turn lanes for traffic turning south onto I-17, and the northbound I-17 exit ramp will be widened to better accommodate traffic turning east and west on Carefree Highway. The construction project is expected to take about three months to complete.

ADOT will work to minimize disruptions to traffic, but cautions drivers to slow down, pay attention to signs and watch for construction workers while the improvements are made.

What's the Long-Term Plan?

An environmental update has begun to examine various types of traffic interchanges at the increasingly busy intersection. All of the options will require replacing the existing Carefree Highway bridge over I-17 with a longer, wider bridge and constructing new, high-volume ramps for traffic entering and exiting the freeway. The environmental update is scheduled to be completed in early 2006, and the design process is scheduled thereafter. Both are necessary steps to move forward with improvements to the I-17 and Carefree Highway interchange. **A public meeting will be held at Desert Mountain Middle School, 35959 N. 7th Avenue, on September 22 from 6–8 P.M.** to present traffic interchange options being considered.

Elsewhere on Interstate 17

Plans call for a third lane and a carpool lane to be added to I-17 between Loop 101 and Carefree Highway. Freeway design activities are underway, and ADOT expects construction to begin in 2007.

ADOT and the Federal Highway Administration are nearing completion of environmental studies on the Loop 303 between Happy Valley Road and I-17. The proposed path of the Loop 303 would connect with I-17 at Lone Mountain Road. Watch for notices in the coming weeks about the Loop 303 public hearing to be held this fall. Construction activities for the initial section of Loop 303 between I-17 and Happy Valley Road are scheduled to begin in 2008.

